



Testimony to the Public Health Committee

March 16, 2012

By Leslie Simoes, Director of Advocacy

Testimony in support of:

Raised House Bill 5437: *AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEFINITIONS OF MENTAL RETARDATION AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY*

The Arc Connecticut is a 60-year old advocacy organization committed to protecting the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and to promoting opportunities for their full inclusion in the life of their communities.

The Arc Connecticut supports redefining the term “Mental Retardation” to “a significant limitation in intellectual functioning and deficit in adaptive behavior that originated during the developmental period before eighteen years of age” because it is consistent with both the proposed DSM-V revision and the AAIDD definition practices. The last time Connecticut chose to update this definition was in 1977. Using this more up to date definition will allow professionals to have the tools to better identify the supports and services for this population.

Further clarification of “a significant limitation in intellectual functioning” as “an intelligence quotient more than two standard deviations below the mean as measured by tests of general intellectual functioning that are individualized, standardized and clinically and culturally appropriate to the individual” will also allow professionals to better identify the supports that individuals need. They will be able to utilize a variety of appropriate tools, in concert with the statutorily defined general intelligence tests, to measure intellectual functioning.

Over the past 4 years The Arc Connecticut, in partnership with other advocacy organizations, have worked toward the goal of passing the language in this bill and we commend the Public Health Committee for raising it and urge its passage.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, for clarification or to arrange a visit with a private provider of community based services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in your area. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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